1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

Of all this there was a cessation as soon as I had approached the village near enough for the dogs to give warning, by barking, that a stranger was coming. In answer to my question why there had been singing, drumming and shaking rattles, I was told that there had been a dance for somebody who had died in the village. From what the Indians represented to me I gathered that the dancing, the singing, and the »music» had been performed in order to protect the soul of the dead person from being attacked by evil spirits, but it is possible that, instead of this, the dancers were aiming at protecting the villagers from being harmed by the spirit of the deceased, or from the evil spirit who had killed the newly dead person. The latter explanation is more in correspondence with other observations of the customs of the Choroti Indians.

In the literature one finds a statement that the Choroti bury their dead in a lying-down position.[1] This mode of burying does occur among the Choroti, but these Indians also inter their departed ones in a hunched up, squatting position.[2] As an instance, the Choroti who were living near Tatarenda declared that they usually buried their dead in the last-mentioned position. This mode of burial may possibly be connected with cultural influence from the neighbouring Chiriguano, but in such a case that influence must have been active also among the Choroti living right away on the Pilcomayo, for all the Choroti skeletons (three) that Nordenskiöld excavated in the neighbourhood of Fort Crevaux had been buried in a sitting posture. Of the three Choroti skeletons unearthed by him at Caiza in the Tatarenda district, one was found »in a doubled-up posture, with one hand on the top of the head and the other placed on the chest».[3]

During our journey Nordenskiöld only excavated these six Choroti skeletons. He has kindly permitted me to publish his notes on the circumstances under which the skeletons were found. The data above referred to I have taken from the catalogue supplied by Nordenskiöld to the Ethnographical Section of the Riksmuseum, in which his original notes upon modes of burial are embodied (see preceding foot-note).

Even in my earliest published account of the Choroti Indians I made

[1] Karsten (3), p. 204.

[2] von Rosen (3), p. 13.

[3] This according to Nordenskiöld's original notes in the Riksmuseum inventory, 03. 3. Whether the skeletons excavated at Caiza were found in a sitting or lying down position is not expressly stated in the notes. But as regards the Choroti skeletons excavated at Crevaux, Nordenskiöld especially points out that they had been buried in a »sitting posture».

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco

Choroti SK6

necessity of fishing also at that time compels them to stay near the river. But as soon as the rainy season sets in and the algaroba, tusca, and other fruits begin to ripen, the Indians take up their abode in the forest close by some small lagoon or a rare water-hole several leagues from the river, spending most of their »summer» time in drinking algaroba beer, feasting, and dancing. The Indians of the Guachalla region form the main bulk of the Choroti tribe and number about a thousand individuals. Their immediate neighbours in the south are the Ashluslay, to whom the Choroti are closely related in their culture. There is much communication between the two tribes and intermarriage is frequent. Thus the chief of the Choroti, the old Ātamo, was on his father's side of Ashluslay descent, but since mother-right prevails among the Chaco Indians, he had become a member of the Choroti tribe.

There seems to be a certain antagonism between the different Choroti tribes, in consequence of which they have very little intercourse with one another. I particularly noticed such an antagonism between those Choroti who live on the river and those living in the interior. It would have been impossible for me to get a guide among the people of the chief Toula to accompany me to Anempä's tribe. Since to these Indians, who in general live to a great extent by fishing, the possession of the river is of great importance, I suppose it is originally due to this enmity that some Choroti Indians have settled in the inhospitable regions in the interior where they are found to-day. These latter even speak a somewhat different dialect of the Choroti language. Thus, one of the commonest words in the language, the word for 'house', is in the dialect of the river Indians *uk*, in the dialect of the inland Indians again *sáuo*.

The Choroti living on the river call the Choroti tribe inhabiting the interior of the Chaco *Asówa*.

The total number of the Choroti I estimate at about 2,000 or a little more.[1] The surrounding tribes are much larger. Of these I have already mentioned the southern neighbours of the Choroti, the Ashluslay, whom the Choroti call *Ahle*. Their neighbours in the north are the Tobas, whom they call *Johlōki*, and another Chaco tribe, the Tapiete, whom they call *Ohuénik*. Their neighbours in the west again are the Mataco, whom the Choroti call *Hotenúk*. They have dealings with all these tribes, although at times they have been at war with them, or at

[1] Consequently, when Nordenskiöld estimates the Choroti at 4,000 individuals, this is a great exaggeration.